

CEDAR LOON RAFT MAINTENANCE CHECKLISTS

SPRING MAINTENANCE

April to Early May

- Check the raft base for damage or rot. Secure or replace any loose or damaged decking boards. Tighten timberlock bolts holding the raft together.
- Check eyebolts located on two corners of the raft. Replace only if heavily corroded.
- Cut back/remove plants or other materials if blocking access to the nest bowl or making the raft too heavy. Add shade plants at corners if last year's are dead or missing.
- If bare wood or soil is exposed in the center nest bowl area, cover with soil/ moss/ groundcover plants.
- Inspect avian guard (if present). Check/replace attachment boards, screws, and/or metal plates holding the lobster trap wire to the raft. Replace any branches used for shade cover.
- Put raft in the water and check flotation. Add 11-liter sealed, hard plastic oyster floats if the base is not floating 2 to 4 inches above water.
- Assess raft location. Still protected? Enough water? New threats? Still local support?
- Deploy the raft if not left in water over winter. Retrieve the anchor line flotation and clip the anchor lines onto the eyebolts on the corners of the raft.
- Check that carabiners on the anchor lines still spring shut. Replace if corroded or not shutting properly.
- Tighten clamps on anchor lines. If you can't tighten or remove a corroded clamp, add a new clamp next to the old one.

For more information about maintaining your raft go to the 'Raft' section of maineaudubon.org/loonrestoration. Or watch the webinar recording 'All About Loon Nesting Rafts' at maineaudubon.org/raftmaintenance

SUMMER MONITORING

May to August

- Check on the raft weekly throughout the season to make sure the decking floats 2 to 4 inches above the water, plants are intact, and the anchor lines (and avian guard if present) remain sturdily attached. Fix any issues that arise as long as the loon pair isn't nesting on or near the raft. If you will be away, please find someone else to help. A raft cannot be left unattended for the season or it is likely to become a hazard to loons or chicks.
- Routinely check for, and deal with, goose poop on the raft. Goose poop may deter loons from nesting on rafts, but regularly removing it and ensuring the plants remain intact can help resolve this issue.
- Submit observations to maineaudubon.org/loonmonitoring. Printable forms can also be found in the monitoring section of our website: maineaudubon.org/loonrestoration

END OF SEASON MAINTENANCE

Mid to Late August

Remove raft in mid-August if the pair hatched chick(s) or mid to late August if the nest failed or there was no nesting.

- Unclip raft from anchor lines.
- Clip the carabiner on each anchor line to a buoy, boat bumper, or float.
- Cut zip ties and remove any floats that aren't tightly secured under the raft.
- Tow raft to shore and move to an approved storage area, unless the raft will remain in the water over the winter.
- If possible, store propped up off ground, such as on cinder blocks. If nearshore, secure raft to tree, post, etc.

CEDAR LOON RAFT REPLACEMENT SUPPLY LIST

Many of the materials provided with your raft will last for decades without need of replacement. Some supplies, such as carabiners and anchor line clamps, may need to be replaced more frequently. Below is a list of supplies we use to outfit our cedar log rafts and cost estimates. Keep in mind that you may never need to buy many of these supplies. You should be ready to spend up to \$50 in a given year for replacement supplies and/or plants, but most years costs will be minimal.

DESCRIPTION	SIZE	QTY	PER	ESTIMATED COST PER UNIT	
Anchor Line Materials					
Stainless steel cable clamp	1/4"	2	Anchor line	\$0.50	Each
Vinyl coated wire rope cable	3/16-1/4" W 6-12 ft L	2	Raft	\$0.50	Per Foot
Stainless steel spring snap hook carabiner	4"	1	Anchor line	\$3.33	Each
Two-cell cinder block	8"x 8" x 16"	1	Anchor	\$3.50	Each
Stainless steel screw eye bolts	3/8" thickness, 4-5" L	1	Anchor line	\$0.43	Each
Flotation					
Sealed, hard plastic oyster floats*	11 liter	4-8	Raft	\$12.00	Each
Extra long heavy duty cable ties/zip ties, UV resistant	36-48" long	2	Float	\$0.80	Each
Structure					
TimberLOK wood screws	6" long	8	Raft	\$1.00	Each
Rough cut cedar decking (we use Frost Cedar in Emden)	4' L x 3/4" H, variable widths	Enough to cover a 4' x 4' area			
Decking screws	4" long	4-6	Board	\$0.32	Each
Avian Guard					
Stainless Steel Mending Plate	3" long	4-6	Avian Guard	\$2.50	Each
Wood screws for attaching mending plate	1" long	4	Mending plate	\$0.08	Each
Square wood dowel or cut tobacco stake (not pressure treated)	4' L x 1" W x 1-3" H	2	Avian Guard		
Wood screws to attach wood dowels to decking	1-1/2" to 2" L	3	Board	\$2.00	Each
Lobster trap wire Cavatorta 12 Green	7' x 4' piece, 12 gauge	1	Raft	\$40.00	Each

* Oyster floats and lobster trap wire can be purchased in Maine from companies such as Portland Trap and Brooks Mill Trap Co (in Thomaston) or online from oyster supply companies such as: <https://www.outlawoysters.com/products/11-liter-float/>